

The CRUEL STEP-MOTHER ;

Or, the UNHAPPY SON.

YOU most indulgent parents lend an ear,
And soon a dismal story you shall hear,
A story strange, but certain true indeed,
Enough to make a heart of stone to bleed.
In York, that famous city of renown,
There liv'd a gentlemen, one Squire Brown,
Whose wealth and riches were exceeding great,
But yet he had no heir to his estate.
He had a virtuous, kind, and loving wife,
With whom he liv'd a comfortable life,
The want of children was their only grief,
But God was pleas'd to send them some relief.
She did conceive, and with a son we hear,
Great was the joy when she deliver'd were,
Much feasting, which for many days did last,
Both rich and poor did of their bounty taste.
It pleas'd God the child did live and thrive,
Until it came unto the age of five ;
At five years old his sorrows fore begun,
And so continued many years to run.
The greatest pleasures that we here can boast
So sudden fade, and are but short at most ;
When death approaches who can shun the dart ?
He has command and strikes up to the heart.
The Squire's lady was took wond'rous ill,
The doctors us'd in vain their best of skill ;
All cou'd not do, the fatal stroke death gave,
And no man that's born her life cou'd save.
Her husband then she sent for out of hand,
Her weeping friends did now around her stand ;
Her husband came, she said to him, my dear,
The time is short I have to tarry here .
Be careful of the darling child your son,
See that in Virtue's paths he strives to run,
That I in heaven may see him again,
And there in endless bliss with him remain.
For the child's sake wed not again,
For if you do I cannot rest I fear,
Let no step mother my dear child abuse,
Whom I so tenderly did use,
My jointure, which is fifty pounds a year,
I leave to him I love most dear ;
Be you a tender father to my son,
Think on my words when I'm dead and gone.

He said, dearest, these words I keep in mind,
I to the child will prove a father kind ;
To wrong the child I wrong myself you know,
I love the child too well to serve it so
Then for her child she straightway did call,
Whilst tears from her cheeks down did fall,
And kissing him with lips as cold as clay,
The child did to his fainting mother say :
Mamma, what makes you kiss me and cry,
I hope you will be better speedily ?
I hope I shall sweet dear to him she said,
Then turned herself and straightway died,
She scarce two months in the grave had laid,
E'er he forgot the promise he had made,
Which made the proverb true as we do find,
That out of sight is quickly out of mind,
Unto a rich and wealthy widow old,
He went a courting oft, as we are told,
No rest or quiet would he let her have,
Until her consent she unto him had gave.
She said before she to him did engage,
She had a daughter fair, ten years of age,
And therefore for her daughter's sake,
She was resolv'd a widow's will to make.
He gave consent that it should so be made,
And in much triumph now this couple wed ;
But during the time these things were done,
He quite forgot his dear and only son.
His new wife was cross and very proud,
And his own son never was allowed,
With them to dine but at her chair to stand,
Just like a footman waiting her command.
Her daughter she must at the table sit,
And pick and cull the best of what is eat,
Besides a waiting maid to miss must have,
While the poor lad is made a drudge and slave.
Although he was scorn'd yet we find,
How fortune unto him did prove so kind,
His mother's brother died as we hear,
And left this boy two hundred pounds a year.
His father then the interest was to have
For to maintain the child so fine and brave,
But if he died e'er to age he came,
His father he was to enjoy the same.

His step mother found things were order'd so,
She was resolv'd to work his overthrow ;
Cries she when he is put away and gone
What's left to him will soon become my own.
She with the devil then did straightway think,
And to her husband gave a sleeping drink ;
And as he sleeping in the garden lay,
She unto the boy these words did say :
Go watch your father as he sleeping lies,
And if thou see'st him wake or going to rise,
Come and tell me make the best haste you can ;
And so she did this harmless youth trepan.
The boy with watching long did go to sleep,
Then softly she did to his father creep,
Off from his finger she a ring did take,
On purpose of this boy a thief to make.
For as the innocent boy a sleeping lay,
She in his pocket did the ring convey,
Then with great joy into the house did come,
And said, I hope his business I have done.
The lad awaking, straight did rub his eyes,
But seeing of his father going to rise,
To inform his mother he straightway did run ;
Meanwhile his father in doors did come.
Missing of his ring, he to her did say,
My dear, what makes you take my ring away ?
Cries she I took it not upon my life,
You may believe me, as I am your wife.
But if you'd know what is of it become,
I'd have you examine well your son,
As in the garden you did sleeping dose,
I saw him fumbling at your clothes.
He went to search his son, the ring he found,
Then hand and foot straightway him he bound,
And lash'd him till the blood did run,
Whilst the hard hearted wretch stood gazing on.
Cries she now send this wicked rogue to sea,
Lest that he doth disgrace your family :
I'll get a master for him soon she cry'd,
For he no longer shall with me abide.
He gave consent and she a master got,
And he was sent away—hard was his lot ;
Where we will leave him to cross the main,
And turn unto this wicked wretch again.
But God who sees our actions here below,
He did not let this wretch unpunish'd go,
For this boy's mother to them did appear,
One night when they in bed together were.

This apparition told them of the ring,
And how she serv'd the boy in every thing,
Then did she shake the bed whereon they lay,
And then it vanished from them away.
The squire he was very much surpris'd,
And finding that his wife had told him lies,
To make him send his poor boy away,
He went into a strong despair they say.
To add unto his grief, we understand,
A letter from his son came to his hand ;
At Jamaica he was, the letter told,
And to a captain there was basely sold.
And as they sailing were upon the main,
They by a Spanish privateer was ta'en ;
The ship condemn'd and they were made slaves,
his is kind sir, said he, my desperate case.
The father, seeing this, then swoon'd away,
Crying to his wife, both night and day,
Thou cursed wretch what hast thou now done,
To make a father thus abuse his son ?
From home in grief he rambled that day,
And to a lawyer went without delay,
Made straight his will and left his son his store,
Then went and hang'd himself before his door.
The lawyer finding what he had done,
Did straightway send a letter to his son,
For to advise him to come home with speed ;
And money sent to ransom him indeed.
Which letter by good fortune he receiv'd,
His ransom paid and quickly was reliev'd ;
He got a ship and home with speed he came,
None but the lawyer did know of the same.
He soon came home unto the great surprise,
Of his base mother, who with flattering lies
Would fain excuse herself, but all in vain
To law he went with her, and did obtain
The cause of her—five hundred pounds, besides
Because he basely was by her betray'd,
Which vex'd her so, it soon broke her heart,
o think she with her ill got gain must part
Her darling daughter being left alone,
Despised by all and pitied by none,
She sold off all she had and went away,
And has not been heard off to this day.
To step-mothers let this a warning be,
Never to use poor children cruelly,
For God will help the widow in distress,
And be a father to the fatherless.

Printed and Sold by J. Davenport, 6, George's Court, St. John's Lane, West Smithfield, London.
Where may be had the greatest variety of Slips, Collections, Patterns,

